



AMERICAN ACADEMY OF
ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEONS

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April 25, 2016

The Honorable Renee Ellmers
United States House of Representatives
1210 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman Ellmers,

On behalf of over 18,000 board-certified orthopaedic surgeons, the American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS) would like to commend you for introducing H.R. 5001, the Flexibility in Electronic Health Record (EHR) Reporting Act.

The AAOS believes that health information technology (HIT) is a fundamental component to improving our nation's health care system and has been working to increase EHR adoption and Meaningful Use (MU) certification among its members. Additionally, the AAOS looks forward to seeing what changes CMS will make to the MU program for the start of the MACRA program in 2017. However, the current MU program requires providers to report for 365 days in a reporting year. This means that providers will be reporting for the 2016 program through December 31, 2016. Providers and hospitals will have no time to plan, prepare, or implement any systematic or infrastructural changes necessary to participate in the new MU program and payment models that start on January 1, 2017.

H.R. 5001 would address these issues by instituting a 90-day reporting period for the MU program for the 2016 reporting year, regardless of payment year or stage of meaningful use criteria involved. This will give providers and hospitals the opportunity to complete the reporting for the MU program early in the year, and will allow time at the end of the year for providers and hospitals to prepare for the changes in the MU program that begin in 2017.

In both the 2014 and 2015 reporting years, CMS instituted a change which allowed providers to report for a consecutive 90-day reporting period instead of the full 365 days. The AAOS believes that having a 90-day reporting period has been good policy in the past and will be good policy for the 2016 reporting year, allowing providers and hospitals the opportunity to make any changes and prepare for the new programs in 2017.

Again, the AAOS commends the efforts put forth in this legislation to provide needed flexibility in the Meaningful Use program. Please feel free to contact Catherine Boudreaux, AAOS Senior Manager of Government Relations (boudreaux@aaos.org), if you have any questions or if the AAOS can serve as a resource to you.

Sincerely,

Gerald R. Williams, Jr., MD
President
American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons